

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SSM-03
/101 W

-----090402 260725Z /14

R 260400Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1637
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USINT BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 2431

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, IZ, YE
SUBJECT: IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT IN SANA

1. IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT AHA MUHI-AL-DIN MA'RUF WAS IN SANA ON OFFICIAL VISIT JUNE 20 - JUNE 22. ACCORDING TO FOREIGN MINISTER ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ, VICE PRESIDENT MA'RUF WAS NOT INVITED BY YARG AND VISIT WAS TAKEN AT INITIATIVE OF IRAQI GOVERNMENT. AL-ASNAJ SAID HE BELIEVED PURPOSE OF VISIT NOT ONLY TO YEMEN BUT TO SOMALIA AND PDRY AS WELL WAS IN RESPONSE TO INTERNAL IRAQI POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. AL-ASNAJ OPINED THAT HE IRAQI GOVERNMENT WANTS TO "BUILD UP" MA'RUF, WHO IS A KURD, AND THEREBY DEMONSTRATE THAT THE BAATHI REGIME IN IRAQ IS IN FACT SETTLEING ITS MINORITY PROBLEM.

2. AL-ASNAJ CONTINUED THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH M'RUF
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WERE GENERAL IN CONTENT TOUCHING PRIMARILY ON BILATERAL RELATIONS AS THEY RELATE TO IRAQ'S ASSISTANCE TO YEMEN IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND ROADBUILDING.

3. AL-ANSAJ SAID THAT ON REGIONAL ISSUES THE IRAQIS TOOK THEIR EXPECTED POSITIONS: (A) PURSUING A STRONG NEGATIVE LINE ON THE ARAB/ISRAELI QUESTION, AND (B)

TAKING A NON-COMMITTAL STAND ON THE RECENT YARG CALL FOR AN ARAB SUMMIT, WHICH IRAQI GOVERNMENT DOES NOT PARTICULARLY FAVOR.

4. COMMENT: RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND YARG HAVE OVER LAST YEAR OR SO BECOME STRAINED, PARTICULARLY IN THE WAKE OF THIS SPRING'S ASSASSINATION OF AL-HAJRI IN WHICH THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME IRAQI INVOLVEMENT. AT SAME TIME ARRESTS OF LEFTISTS IN TAIZ HAVE ALSO RECENTLY TAKEN PLACE AND SOME OF THESE MEN WERE REPORTEDLY IN IRAQI PAY. NONETHELESS, YARG IS NOT SEEKING TROUBLE WITH IRAQ AND NO DOUBT TOOK OPPORTUNITY OF MA'RUF'S VISIT TO TRY TO REDUCE SOME OF THESE RECENT STRAINS. IT IS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO STATES WILL EVER BE PARTICULARLY CLOSE, GIVEN THE AL-HAMDI REGIME'S INTERNAL AND INTER-ARAB MODERATION WHICH THE BAATHIS IN BAGHDAD MAY FIND TOO BOURGEOIS AND PRO-EGYPTIAN AND SAUDI FOR THEIR IDEOLOGICAL TASTES. SCOTES

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